

DIGNITY KIT GUIDANCE NOTE

**Gender-based Violence Sub-sector
Rohingya Crisis Response
Bangladesh**

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1. Background Information

Dignity kits help women and girls maintain their dignity during humanitarian crises. Preserving dignity is essential to self-esteem and confidence and critical to protection, including GBV risk mitigation and response.

In the aftermath of the conflict experienced by the Rohingya community in Myanmar and in this refugee context in Bangladesh, women and girls need basic items to interact comfortably and safely in public. They also need access to personal hygiene, particularly menstrual hygiene. Without access to culturally appropriate clothing and hygiene items, the mobility of women and girls is restricted. Their health and safety can also be compromised. As a result, they might be unable to seek basic services including humanitarian aid.

2. Purpose

Dignity kits help women and girls by:

- Providing information about hygiene, reproductive health, GBV related issues, and services through the inclusion of health and protection information;
- Improving mobility of women and girls by providing specific sanitary items. In some contexts, mobility can also be enhanced by including items such as clothes or a covering, without which women cannot be seen in public;
- Contributing to the psychosocial and physical wellbeing of women and girls, by including items such as intimate wash and pads which help women and girls maintain appropriate hygiene and feel comfortable;
- Allowing budget substitution for families to purchase important items, such as food;
- Contributing to the protection of women and girls, by including items such as flashlights and whistles, so that women and girls do not have to walk in the dark and feel that they can call for assistance, if needed.

Dignity Kits can be used in the context of GBV programming in a number of ways, including:

- As an entry point to begin working with women to identify the GBV risks in the community, and to advance GBV prevention and response programs;
- To raise awareness during distribution, encouraging communities to engage in discussions on important topics such as preventing and responding to GBV;
- To share information on where women can access GBV services. In particular, distribution of dignity kits can be focused on reaching women at risk; GBV survivors, pregnant and lactating women, women head of household, women and girls with disabilities, women and girls living in remote areas;
- To provide additional support to GBV survivors, if distribution is carried out in collaboration with GBV service providers;
- Assembly of dignity kits can be set up as an income-generating activity for women affected by crisis. In addition to the important economic support, bringing affected women together for kit assembly also presents opportunities to organize awareness raising sessions, educational chats, or group counselling sessions.

3. Coordination

To avoid duplication of services, ensure the most vulnerable are prioritised, set and uphold quality standards, and mitigate negative impacts on the supply chain and markets, it is essential that organisations liaise with the GBV Sub-sector Coordination team, which will be supported by UNFPA, as the lead technical agency on GBV and dignity kits. All organisations should coordinate the location and identification of target population and share precise (planned and completed) distribution data. With the support of the Dignity Kits Task Force, the GBV Sub-sector shall put in place monitoring and information management protocols to compile Dignity Kit data, ensure best

practices and to share lessons learned with the members of the sub-sector (See Annex 1 and for the preparedness assessment and Annex 2 for Post - distribution monitoring tool)

The GBV sub-sector coordination team should share available needs assessment data with all partners, to avoid duplicative assessments. The GBV Sub-sector coordination team is also responsible for using this data and feedback from partners to plan for and advocate for dignity kit resource mobilisation as part of humanitarian funding processes.

4. Programming

A. Organisational Preparedness Assessment

An organization considering procurement of dignity kits to support GBV programming should first assess its capacities to store the kits in an effective way, distribute the kits in a safe and appropriate manner, and provide post-monitoring feedback. The following aspects should be taken into consideration before requesting the kits:

- Availability of basic GBV services in organisation's operational area to ensure linkages between kits and services
- Availability of storage place
- Capacity to ensure transportation of the kits from the storage site the distribution site
- Capacity to ensure distribution respecting distribution principles (including availability of female staff able to explain how to use the kits and provide information on services available)
- Capacity to ensure post distribution focus group discussion and provide feedback

See Annex 1 for Preparedness and Planning Checklist.

B. Needs Assessment

If the organisation has the potential preparedness to integrate dignity kits into GBV programming approaches, it should determine if there are unmet needs that it may be able to fill with a specific dignity kit intervention. An indispensable step of determining the appropriate modality for dignity kit distribution is to assess the needs of women and adolescent girls affected by the crisis. Wherever possible, information from multi-sector needs assessments and other data sources (e.g. safety audits, WASH assessments, family counting, and registration data, etc.) should be compiled and used to evaluate needs and plan. Partners should also consult the Joint Response Plan and the GBV sub-sector to find out if there are areas or volumes that are specifically needed to implement the sub-sector's planned response.

If broader needs assessment and appropriate demographic data are not available, pre-distribution focus group discussions (FGD) should help assess the needs of women and girls in specific areas and help understand how to organize the distribution and select beneficiaries. In a pre-distribution FGD, the possible questions could be:

- Are there places where you do NOT feel safe? What do you think could be done about this?
- Is there a place where you prefer to gather during the day?
- What are the basic hygiene products that you need to stay clean and healthy?
- Do you have what you need for washing your body? If not, what would be useful?
- What kind of items would help you to move around more freely and to spend time outside your shelter? (e.g. probe existing kit items including preferred garments for covering/modesty, safety items like portable lights/whistles, or weather-appropriate footwear etc.)
- Do you need any specific clothing items to carry-on your daily tasks?
- What items do you miss from home that, if you had them, would provide comfort?
- What types of sanitary materials do you usually use during menstruation? If the answer to the question on types of sanitary materials is reusable cloth, also ask:

- Do you have a safe access to water to wash the cloth?
- What kind of packaging would you like items to be in? What is more useful? (bag, pack, bucket)

Interviews with key informants should complement the information collected through the FGDs.

C. Dignity Kits Content

Dignity kits typically contain standard hygiene items such as sanitary pads, hand soap, underwear, amongst other things. If multiple partners are procuring and distributing kits, then the contents need to be harmonised to ensure consistency and equity in the distributions.

The standard content as adopted on October 9th 2017 by the GBV sub-sector is designed to last 3 months. The kit contains the following items:

No.	List of items	No of Unit	Unit Cost (BDT)	Total Cost (BDT)	Remarks
1	Cloth napkin	6 strips	30	180	Red markin/shalu cotton cloth 1 piece (half a yard)-18"/36" 6 strips from 3 yards
2	Laundry Bar	2	18	36	Wheel laundry bar (130 gm)
3	Bucket with lid	1	350	350	20 litre
4	Underwear	3	50	150	Medium size cotton panty
5	Orna	1	150	150	Cotton printed orna – 36"/90"
6	Maxi	1	250	250	Medium size cotton printed maxi
7	Slipper	1 pair	100	100	Rubber slipper
8	Torch/solar lantern	1	300	300	
9	Thami	1	250	250	2 yards thick printed cotton cloths – 45"/72"

Partners who had procured kits before the sub-sector's decision on the standard contents will need a grace period to harmonise their kits with the standard, which should expire by January 2018. To allow this grace period to be effective, partners must carefully map their distribution sites at the block or zone level prior to initiation of programming to ensure there is not overlap or conflict between different types of kits in close proximity to one another. No new kits should be ordered without prior consultation with the sub-sector on current assessment feedback and the standard contents.

This content may vary over time according to the needs and feedback of the affected population. The GBV sub-sector will review the contents of the kits based on post-distribution monitoring conducted by organizations every 3 months (the estimated life of the standard kit in an emergency phase), with the first review of contents beginning in January 2018.

For actors providing both hygiene and dignity kits, and who are covering areas where other actors are providing hygiene kits, coordination on contents of kits should be discussed so as to avoid duplication of materials and to ensure coverage of essential female sanitary items. The WASH, Camp Management and NFI/Shelter clusters should be provided with information about Dignity Kit distributions regularly and coordinate as needed.

D. Transportation and Storage

When selecting a warehouse for storage of dignity kits, consider the following factors: security, capacity, ease of access, structural solidity, and absence of any direct threats. The storage of dignity kits is not generally problematic, as most items are non-perishable or have long shelf lives. In some areas it might be challenging to keep stock, including dignity kits, for any period of time due to the security risks. When selecting storage for dignity kits, attention should be given to:

- Location: Ensure appropriate road access for the largest vehicles that may need to come to the warehouse. Avoid warehouses situated in low-lying land.
- Accessibility: If possible, locate the warehouse in a place where the kits can be easily received and distributed.
- Security: In many situations, security guards are employed to reduce looting or theft.
- Capacity/space: Warehouse facilities must have sufficient capacity for both storage and handling.

E. Distribution

At a minimum, three basic conditions should be met in order for any intervention including dignity kits to be undertaken by an organisation.

First, dignity kits should be distributed only as part of an integrated, coordinated response. Second, the dignity kits can be procured and distributed in a timely manner, as determined by the exigencies of the emergency. Third, dignity kit provision must serve as an entry point for broader protection and health programming on Reproductive Health (RH) Gender Based Violence (GBV), and/or psychosocial support for women and girls. Dignity kit distribution should be understood as distinct from and not a replacement for NFI distributions.

Therefore, distribution of dignity kits cannot be a standalone activity. It must be accompanied by discussions, information sharing, and awareness raising. The distribution of kit provides an opportunity to meet and speak to women and girls, share information, and better understand their concerns.

Distribution of dignity kits may be done alongside other relief items targeting female's shelter, food, NFI. For instance, information on critical issues can be shared before distribution such as where/how to access humanitarian services and information on reproductive health, legal rights, child care, hygiene, and GBV. Distribution also presents an opportunity for awareness rising on hygiene issues, such as how and where to wash or dispose of menstrual items and explanations of each item in the kit.

Dignity kits entail distributing items to a small number of people. Potential risks should be assessed and all measures taken to eliminate them. It is important to ensure that humanitarian interventions, and the environments in which these are provided, do not further expose people to physical hazards, violence or human rights abuses. It is also essential to have clear prioritization framework when selecting beneficiaries, if this can be done in a safe and transparent manner.

In both camp and non-camp settings, distribution of dignity kits runs a risk of increasing the vulnerability of women. Receiving a dignity kit can be very embarrassing for some women and girls, especially in conservative communities. And so some women may be hesitant about collecting dignity kits. When organizing distribution, consider potential safety and security risks, specifically GBV related risks, and seek to devise ways to address these.

There are a number of ways in which organizations distributing dignity kits can ensure that distribution is safe and appropriate, and that the kits go to targeted women and girls:

- Include women in the process of selecting the distribution points and dates, providing information prior to the distribution (what, when, where, how) so women and girls can plan to collect their dignity kit safely and discreetly
- Organize the distribution in a discreet place, by women staff to women/ girls beneficiaries usually preferred
- If other distributions are taking place at the same time (food, shelter, etc.) designate a separate space for dignity kits
- Avoid locations a long way away from shelters as these may increase GBV risks
- Encourage women to create collectives, to stay together during the kits collection journey
- Consider using female or male porters
- Sensitize any male volunteers on the need to stay out of women-only spaces, and ask them to assist in creating safe entry and exit points from the area for women and girls
- Consider if the time of distributions allows women to be back at home before dark
- Audit dignity kit distribution as part of safety audits, if trained staffs are available; select a security focal point for the distribution
- Prepare the activity tools (distribution list, pre and post activity survey etc.) to ensure attention to gathering disaggregated age and gender data
- Ensure the distribution personnel know the referral pathways and services available so that they can provide information and assist GBV survivors if necessary

F. Post-distribution Monitoring and Feedback from beneficiaries

It is a best practice to conduct post distribution focus group discussions with women and girls 1-3 months after they received the dignity kits to assess or evaluate dignity kit effectiveness to the lives of vulnerable women and girls of reproductive age. It is recommended that approximately 2-5% of the women and girls receiving the kits should be involved in the post distribution FGDs.

The standard questions to guide the FGDs are the follow:

1. Were the contents of dignity kits appropriate and culturally sensitive?
2. Who received dignity kits, and how were beneficiaries selected?
3. Were dignity kits delivered on time to serve their purpose?
4. Do you feel that the dignity kits helped meet women's hygiene needs?
5. Do you feel that the kits helped restoring women's dignity?
6. Was the distribution of the kits organized in an effective way? If not, how would suggest to re-organize the distribution in the future?
7. Do women and girls receive information on how to use the kits?
8. Do women and girls receive information or other GBV/women empowerment services during the distribution?
9. Were women able to access other services as a result of using items in the kits?

Organizations distributing the kits should collect the results of the FGDs and share with the GBV Coordinator for review within one month after distributing the kits.

